

The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child

ISSN: 0079-7308 (Print) 2474-3356 (Online) Journal homepage: <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/upsc20>

Rivalry, Envy, and Jealousy

Peter B. Neubauer M.D.


To cite this article: Peter B. Neubauer M.D. (1982) Rivalry, Envy, and Jealousy, The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child, 37:1, 121-142

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00797308.1982.11823360>




Published online: 07 Feb 2017.



Submit your article to this journal 



View related articles 



Citing articles: 10 View citing articles 

Rivalry, Envy, and Jealousy

PETER B. NEUBAUER, M.D.

FROM THE BEGINNING OF RECORDED HISTORY, SIBLING rivalry, envy, and jealousy have been described as a dramatic, continuous, and often violent struggle. The first siblings in the Bible, Cain and Abel, are an example of this, as are Esau and Jacob, and Joseph and his brothers. The early psychoanalytic literature addressed itself to the traumatic components of the sibling experience, the reactions to the birth of a sibling, and the role of seduction among siblings. In the search for psychic trauma, the negative role of siblings was explored. Freud (1916–17) states, “The motives for these [violent conflicts] are rivalry for parental love, for common possessions, for living space. The hostile impulses are directed against older as well as against younger members of the family. It was, I believe, Bernard Shaw who remarked: ‘As a rule there is only one person an English girl hates more than she hates her mother; and that’s her eldest sister’” (p. 205). Freud’s extensions of rivalry from the object relation aspect to common possessions and even living space are noteworthy.

I shall not pursue the pathological conditions of rivalry, envy, and jealousy. This paper focuses on those aspects which contribute to normal development.¹ It is not surprising that the

Director of the Child Development Center, New York; Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the Psychoanalytic Institute, New York University; John B. Turner Lecturer, Columbia University.

Heinz Hartmann Award Lecture presented at the New York Psychoanalytic Society, November 24, 1981.

1. This paper is based on discussions of a study group on siblings. The members of the group were: A. J. Solnit, Chairman, A. Colonna, M. Kris, P. B. Neubauer, S. Provence, and S. Ritvo.

pathological distortions and conflicts provide more visibility of the dynamic factors than can be observed in normal development. While in general psychoanalysts emphasized the pathological effects of the sibling interaction, Freud (1908) considered the positive effects on the promotion of curiosity. The birth of a sibling provokes sexual interest in the child, "awakening his emotions and sharpening his capacities for thought" (p. 212). Mary O'Neil Hawkins (1946) follows Freud's formulation (1914) that the "people to whom he [the child] is in this way fixed are his parents and his brothers and sisters. All those whom he gets to know later [after 6 years] become substitute figures for these first objects of his feelings" (p. 243). The study group chose the developmental approach, that is to say, we selected to follow longitudinally siblings 2 years apart and to study the mutual influences from year to year. Thus, we could observe the interrelationship between the earlier preoedipal organization and its effect on oedipal conflicts. This approach stresses those sibling experiences which further the developmental process and, when we examined pathological reactions, we attempted to infer from them normal variations of development. In this way we could follow the emergence of rivalry, envy, and jealousy and differentiate them from each other on the basis of their corresponding developmental organization. Rivalry, envy, and jealousy are interrelated experiences, but they are not identical. I shall first attempt to define the terms, in reference to the developmental timetable. Then I shall explore the early role of multiple objects and their relationship to each other. Next, I shall compare such findings with some of the prevailing theories of early development which maintain the dyadic-preoedipal constellation as a model.

DEFINITIONS

Psychoanalysts can easily link the meaning of *rivalry* to the original root of the term, namely, "one dwelling by or using the same stream as another," or "the fighting for the access to the river," or "one who is in pursuit of the same object as another" (*The New Century Dictionary*). The struggle is for the basic supply

of water for survival or, in our terms, for the mother's supply to satisfy basic needs. Rivalry, the striving for the exclusive access to the source, implies an assertive, aggressive struggle against the rival. Only later, in favorable circumstances, does it lead to sharing of the source, the mother, to coexistence with the rival, a mutuality of interest, thereby preparing the conditions which later contribute to the solution of the oedipus complex. Rivalry is an act, based on the wish not to lose the object to the rival. Thus, in rivalry, the contact with the object is maintained. "The interesting observation has been made that attachment behavior, such as crying and clinging, becomes more prominent at times of stress. It is important to emphasize that such behavior may represent an intensification of attachment and not necessarily a regression" (Lewis, 1980). The turning against the rival may be accompanied by an increased possessiveness in relation to mother. The difficulties arise when the child turns away from the primary object, abandons rivalry, and seeks substitutes too early. Under these circumstances we can observe the consequences of the disruption of the relationship and its effect on the distribution of object and narcissistic libido. We see here variations on a theme, later to be repeated with different meanings during the oedipal period.

The prototype of *envy*, namely, penis envy, points to a different characteristic which separates it clearly from rivalry and jealousy. It refers to mental attitudes and feelings of discontent with one's own body together with an urge to possess and to identify with the imagined superior achievement and potency of others. It has often been stated that penis envy leads to severe rivalry, but I prefer to say that envy revives or exposes rivalry and jealousy, each intensifying the other. From a developmental point of view, penis envy is related to the phallic phase. From a viewpoint of the content of the experience, it refers to wishes and thoughts which can never be fulfilled.

Envy is based either on the awareness of superior attributes of others or on an idealization of these attributes. The libidinal component of this admiration is linked to resentment, self-devaluation, and sadness. Rivalry may be resolved by competition and coexistence; jealousy, by the repossession of the object's

care; but envy cannot lead to solutions—it is a malignant factor. Furthermore, envy based on penis envy and castration fear contains a fault in reality testing. When envy is allied with rivalry and jealousy, there is an increase of aggression directed against the admired object.

Jealousy is the resentment of the love the third person receives or expects. It comes into operation when additional developmental factors are added to the rivalry, when gender identity is established, that is, when the phallic-oedipal organization has developed and when the triadic relationship has oedipal characteristics. On the line of progression from fear of loss of the object to fear of loss of the object's love we would place rivalry earlier than jealousy. With jealousy, we frequently observe a turning against the new third person, revealing the influence of rivalry on jealousy and the interlocking between preoedipal and oedipal conditions. Jealousy is rivalry on the oedipal level, with the wish to be loved by the opposite-sexed object and the superego retaining their influences. I do not need to expand on the clinical aspect of jealousy or the role it plays in normal development for it is part of the well-explored oedipal complex.

CASE ILLUSTRATION

After this attempt to differentiate and delineate rivalry from jealousy and envy, I present a clinical case as a prelude to my discussion.

A 27-year-old woman, Miss A., entered psychoanalytic treatment with the complaint that she had again been disappointed in a love relationship. In spite of her limitless efforts to please her boyfriend, he had left her. Similarly, in her professional life, she found that her hard work had not led to appropriate recognition and to a favored position in the office.

Her past experiences, until her graduation, had given her the expectation that she could achieve high goals and become a social leader. In new situations, she maneuvered herself to center stage by her articulateness, assertiveness, and seductive charm.

From the data obtained during 3 years of analysis, I shall select those relevant to my topic. Her relationship to the members of her family had developed early and presented an unchanging constellation. She had a close relationship to her father and was sure that she was the preferred child, as the oldest of three daughters. She assumed that the closeness she had with him was not diminished by her father's outward behavior of showing equal interest in his other children. In contrast, she felt detached from her mother with whom she engaged in arguments and mutual criticism, unless she took on the role of advisor and, at times, comforter. Similarly, she felt emotionally distant from her next younger sister, B., who also was academically successful. She gave up what appeared to have been a close tie to C., her youngest sister, at about the age of 8 years. She always pitied C., who, Miss A. felt, was inferior in all areas and thereby spoiled the family image of excellence and achievement. Still, Miss A. had been and remained the intermediary between her parents and this youngest sister, trying to bridge the difficulties by insisting that C.'s basic limitations be recognized.

Since she left home and moved to a university, and later to New York, Miss A. made frequent telephone calls and visits home. Her aim was to engage only her father in discussions about her future. She presented herself to him as someone with difficulties in order to force him to respond and to solicit his assistance. She was aware that by doing this she eliminated her mother and was trying to disrupt her parents' comfortable and loving relationship.

Later it became clear that the positive and idealizing relationship she had with her father and the distance from her mother only covered a deep longing for mother's acceptance. She envied her mother, with her fine-boned figure, her beauty and femininity, while Miss A. looked strong and more masculine like her father. Thus, she wished to be feminine to win her father and masculine to win her mother. During this period in analysis, she had dreams in which the man, before reaching his orgasm, left his penis in her vagina. It was not that she had retained the penis, it was left for her as a gift.

It is not surprising that she had shown interest in homosexual activities, fantasizing herself in the male role, thinking about its advantages, but without ever acting on it. Penis envy, with its characterological and ego equivalents, led her to feelings of depression. Every failure was a sign of her impotence. This was replayed in the transference, where she fluctuated between the wish to be a special patient and the feeling that she did not deserve the attention given her. When I could not immediately accommodate her when her schedule changed, she felt rejected and missed appointments.

Her penis envy and envy of father's professional power were combined with the envy of mother's beauty and position with father. On an earlier genetic level, other factors had contributed to her conflicts.

The patient was 1½ years old when her sister B. was born. As far as I was able to reconstruct her experience, it seems that initially she responded to her sister's birth with an intensified clinging to her mother, which was not responded to, for her mother felt burdened by having had another child so soon. Her maternal attitude had always been limited; she was primarily the administrator-manager of the family. The patient remembered that later on—and the exact time was never clear—she had been very attentive to her sister; she had joined her mother and nurse in the care, feeding, and bathing of B. Family stories about her attitude seemed to confirm Miss A.'s impression that she had become a little mother, using the sister as a doll, experiencing the vicarious pleasure of caring, while she herself was in need of being cared for; she was showing mother how to do it. Repeated dreams implied similar wishes and memories. From then on she displayed that mixture of rivalry for the exclusive attention of father and jealousy of his life with mother. With this role of being caring and motherly and substituting for mother, she then turned to the idealized father, and presented herself as the loving daughter.

This vignette reveals the forceful preoedipal component underneath the oedipal struggle, A.'s jealousy of the parents' relationship to each other, and the roots of her wish to please her boyfriends. Her seemingly positive oedipal position denied her

conflict on the phallic level of organization, where she faced the mixture of rivalry and envy and her ambivalence about her sexual identity. Her overt behavior with her mother as a child, and throughout her adult life, her keeping distance from and rejecting mother, gave no evidence of her intense longing for mother's acceptance and love and her wish for a feminine identification. If we had observed A. during her first years of life, we would have inferred from her behavior that she had broken her tie with mother. Analysis, on the other hand, exposed her strong inner wishes. Whether we can, on the basis of such data, assume that these feelings had been present at the earlier time, or whether these are later endowments from various levels of development, is not yet clear.

It is interesting to note that the patient's relationship to her siblings had become static. The last changes apparently occurred during latency. When she spoke about them after they had seen each other or talked on the telephone, she invariably did so in the same stereotypical way; and whenever the three sisters were together, they repeated their old patterns of relationship.

Reviewing the material of other patients and their relationships to siblings, I found this to be a frequent occurrence throughout adult life: when a family gathers, the old order of position, superiority, rivalry, sensitivity is rapidly established and acted upon. Even though the vicissitudes of life may substantially have altered the circumstances of individuals, it is often surprising to see, e.g., a highly successful and respected man suddenly defer to the judgment of his less than successful brother—older by 2 years. One could speculate that the inability to change the relationship to siblings and to find new ways of coexistence is an indication of partly unresolved pre-oedipal and oedipal conflicts.

The case of Miss A. demonstrates the intertwining of rivalry, envy, and jealousy on various developmental levels. Confronted with this clinical admixture, we may ask whether it is necessary or possible to separate one from the other, or whether it might not be better simply to note the interchangeable meanings and multiple determinants of each.

IMPLICATIONS OF PURSUING RIVALRY, ENVY, AND JEALOUSY
SEPARATELY

As stated before, the child's immediate reaction to a sibling can be an increased mobilization of libidinal strivings for the mother. Since rivalry also mobilizes aggression, it makes a difference whether this aggression will turn only against the sibling or whether it will also become mixed with the libidinal expression toward the mother. If the aggression is turned, not against the intruder, but primarily against the mother without leading to a disengagement from the mother, this hostile attachment will cast its shadow on the fate of the phallic phase and will influence the oedipal constellation. We can observe the reverberation of this early positioning in relation to the primary object and the intruder in the behavior of adults. When one partner in a marriage has an affair, the other turns most frequently against the intruder, repeating here the early rivalry reaction.

A rupture of the primary relationship in response to the birth of a sibling will have serious developmental consequences and certainly will affect the evolvment of object constancy. It may lead to an exclusive attachment to the other parent and thus interfere with the oedipal conflicts. The case vignette demonstrated that the positive oedipal position was a reaction to the disappointment in mother, while the patient forever longed for the emotional tie with mother.

The absence of rivalry certainly is a sign of abnormal development, and we must give it as much attention as we pay to the occurrence of intense rivalry. Again, Miss A. had until now avoided any overt rivalry with her youngest sister, while there was much evidence of envy of B.

Anna Freud (1970) mentions as one reason for the failure of social adaptation "faulty ego ideals due to deviant parental models" (p. 182). She refers here to parents presenting their deviant superego to the child, thereby inducing an abnormal superego formation in the child. We can add that the faulty ego ideal can be a projection of the child's idealization of a parent, as much as it can represent the splitting of the good and bad parent and the externalization of these feelings onto the parent.

In Freud's early propositions, libidinal phases were linked to erotogenic zones. Envy was therefore explored primarily in connection with anatomical differences and the inability of girls and boys to reconcile these differences. It is clear that envy can also pertain to those attributes, physical features, talents, and relationships that children feel others have and fear they cannot attain. This raises the question whether the term "envy" should be confined to those differences that in reality can never be reconciled, such as penis envy, or whether it should be extended to include those possessions that the child cannot obtain at an early age but will achieve later in life. Examples of the latter would be the girl's envy of mother's breasts or other feminine attributes, or the boy's envy of father's prowess, or the envy of the achievements of older siblings. However one defines the term, it is important to recognize these differences in order to arrive at an appropriate diagnostic assessment and guide to psychoanalytic therapy, particularly child analysis. The child's search for explanations of these differences, his theory formation, which is a compromise between reality perception and fantasy, is an excellent source for understanding this struggle. Often enough, these explanations stay with the child for a long time and have an organizing effect on his further development.

Since we were studying sibling interactions within the range of normal development, we had to test our experience and formulations from the point of view of the psychoanalytic theory of development. The outlines of steps of normal developmental progression can be precise and schematic, permitting the delineation of separate steps. Data from clinical work do not confirm such clarity. In reconstruction, as the case of Miss A. demonstrates, we see admixtures, various points of fixation or regression. Under such circumstances, one may either interpret in the direction of later developmental organization, or reduce the data to earlier psychic conflicts. If we accept the differences between rivalry, envy, and jealousy, it seems to be important that we analyze each by following the genetic roots of each. The dynamic-genetic considerations will affect our interpretation, reconstruction, and understanding of the transference. We are reminded of Hartmann's (1939) formulations that "even more important for the *theory of interpretation* are

those instances in which the causal connections of elements . . . are established. . . . The mere reproduction of memories in psychoanalysis can, therefore, only partly correct the lack of connection or the incorrect connection of elements" (p. 63). Furthermore, even with our increasing ability to recognize very early pathology, we are not sure about our capacity to predict; nor does the reconstruction of very early deviations minimize the effect of later developmental modifications and reorganizations on early memory.

EARLY MULTIPLE OBJECT RELATIONS

The study of rivalry, envy, and jealousy leads to the exploration of the role of early multiple relationships.

Over the last decades, impressive contributions have been made by analysts who have observed children from birth on and studied the vicissitudes of mother-child relationships. As a result, our theory of development was expanded to include propositions dealing with the overriding significance of the mother-child unit, a unit that provides the basis for understanding the early construction of the child's inner representational world. Examining sibling experience and rivalry, we become increasingly aware of the additional role of objects other than the mother in early life.

There is no need to restate in detail that the average daily life of children reflects the pivotal role of mother, but there is a need to emphasize the experience with father, grandparents, older siblings, nurses, and so forth, each playing a significant, supportive role. The exclusive focus on the mother-child relationship seems to parallel the breaking up of the extended and even the nuclear family. Thus, these studies reveal the precarious nature of this dual relationship, as if there were only one parent available.

This attachment of the child to the parents, when they fulfill their average expectable function, permits a wide exposure to other objects. Only when parents are not able to support the child's developmental need is there danger that too many ob-

jects lead to a dilution of libidinal bonding. The child-rearing practice in kibbutzim is informative. I wish I could include a photographic sequence of the reaction of a 2½-year-old boy watching his mother breast-feeding his newborn sister for the first time. This child grew up with peers from birth, a *metapelet* (nurse-teacher) taking care of these children in a children's home. The parents see their child during the day and for a time in the evening. Here, then, is this boy, watching, first puzzled, then crying, later pushing the baby away from the breast, then turning to the father, who tries to comfort him by giving him something to eat. Again the boy tries to move the sibling away from the mother. In spite of his peer group exposure and the sharing of the *metapelet*, there is no doubt that the parents are the primary objects. The psychoanalysts in Israel confirm this impression by their findings from the analyses of kibbutz children: their neurotic symptoms are centered on the usual oedipal, parental configurations. The children's attachment to the *metapelet* or to other children in the group does not interfere with the establishment of the usual succession of phases. This finding should not be interpreted as implying a minimization of the danger that, under abnormal circumstances, multiple caretaking can lead to an interference with primary attachments; it also does not obviate the possibility that, underneath the oedipal conditions, we may find the nurse or the caretaker as a primary object.

In our Infant Daycare Center, we can witness another telling process. Some infants and toddlers who have been severely deprived, due to absence of maternal care, attach themselves to a nurse and often make substantial developmental gains. They then carry this improvement into their relationships to their mothers, who get the benefit of the children's improved capacity to initiate a more appropriate relationship.

There are children who are capable of extracting much from the environment, from the mother, from other caretakers. Observing them gives us information not only about individual differences but also about the selectivity of infants. They select their environment and respond to those influences that correspond to their condition, from the need-satisfying stage to

evolving differentiated reactions to objects. They often choose their caretakers, if more than one is available, and reach out to her for bonding and attachment. We can observe how the infant, after a few months, responds with a new excitement when he hears mother or father or a sibling enter the room. Mahler et al. (1975) have described in detail similar observations (Bruce). This demonstrates that the relationship to other adults may not always be a replica of or substitute for the primary relationship. Burlingham (1973) wrote, "On the whole, whatever is written by most analysts on the early years of children's lives, the important persons described are the mothers—the fathers remain in the background, unimportant, and, apart from the early, primary identification, scarcely mentioned until they come into their own when the children reach the phallic-oedipal phase of development. I cannot help feeling that this comparative neglect of the preoedipal father not only does injustice to his role but actually distorts in some manner the fate of the infant-mother relationship" (p. 24). In view of the changes in social mores, Burlingham's statement becomes increasingly important. In the nuclear family, fathers now take part in the early care of infants, and the field of observation and theory has to be extended to include other significant caretakers.

While theories of early development have been formulated on the basis of the dyadic constellation, the role of the father has not completely escaped attention. Mahler et al. (1975) and Greenacre (1966) indicate that infants have a sense of father from early life. Greenacre explores the effect of the physically active father who may not remain a twilight or distant figure. Abelin (1971) observed that there is a turning toward the father at the beginning of the practicing subphase (4 months). Mahler and her co-workers give many examples showing how the child may turn in disappointment to the father.

I do not ally myself with Bion's view that there is an inborn awareness of "threeness" in the human mind, nor do I wish to minimize the well-substantiated significance of the primary objects. I would rather suggest a widening of our model of early object interactions and of those factors that lead to object constancy.

A review of many papers on early object relations reveals an emphasis on the one-to-one relationship of the child with mother, with father, or with another caretaker. The role of fathers or other members of the family is primarily seen as supporting the mother in fulfilling her maternal role or, at best, having a complementary position. I believe that the exclusiveness of the dyadic dimension before the phallic-oedipal phase must be questioned. There is not only the early rivalry with the third object—the intruder, be it father or sibling—but the child's continuous observations and responses to mother's attitude toward others. He will imitate and incorporate her attitude toward others, the sharing of care. He may adopt her role not only in altruistic surrender, but in order to exercise his own capacity to compare, to participate. While he wished to exclude the third person, he also wishes not to be excluded.

It is difficult to study and assess early multiple interactions, in contrast to multiple one-to-one relationships. One reason for this may lie in our methodology. The observations are clearer when the field of observation stays within a simple interaction system, such as that of mother and child. When we observe the child observing others, it is difficult—or not possible—to draw conclusions about his internal reactions and representations, unless they are again expressed in overt behavior or, later, by language. But even this, in early life, will provide only a small window to the internal world. The concept of object constancy, which often refers to the first more secure incorporation of and identification with the primary object, needs then to include more than one object. These others are anchored in the primary relationship. The capacity of the child to know of, and to be able to compare, relationships to various objects is part of object constancy. There is a circular reinforcement; with the security of the primary relation the child can reach out to others, and his capacity to compare in turn gives additional significance to the primary relationship. The early stranger reaction is the beginning of this process. Solnit (1982) gives cognizance to it when he states, "Object constancy is that state . . . in which the child has the capability to retain the memory of and emotional tie to the parents, his primary love objects, and to feel their nurturing, guiding presence even when they are a source

of frustration or disappointment or when they are absent" (p. 202).

THE EXCLUSIVE EMPHASIS ON DYADIC RELATIONS

We would expect those who rely on object relations theory to have studied the role of various objects, but until now few have pressed this line of investigation. This may be due both to historical factors and the methodological difficulties mentioned above. While the various object relations theories I shall examine all stress the importance of objects, they see only one—the mother. This is one reason why I believe that they have an oversimplified view of development, but, as will be shown, there are other reasons as well.

When Fairbairn (1952) states that "libido is primarily object-seeking (rather than pleasure-seeking . . .), and that it is to disturbances in object-relationships of the developing ego that we must look for the ultimate origin of all psychopathological conditions" (p. 82), it is clear that he eliminates the drive theory and structural considerations. The difficulties in the mother-child relationship are seen as the exclusive causes of all disorders. In addition, this emphasis on the object-seeking aspect of the drive denies the infant's powerful search for achieving discharge, satisfying the aim aspect of the drives, and learning that objects can be substituted in order to reach gratification. The diminution of the role played by the aim of the drive minimizes the plasticity of drive expressions and ego-adaptive qualities and creates a view of the drive that is not only monolithic but static.

Winnicott's (1960) concept of the "good-enough mother" as one who "meets the omnipotence of the infant and to some extent makes sense of it" (p. 145) is a touching statement, full of meaning, stressing the corrective-educational influences of mother. It endows mother with omnipotence, views the child's development as a reflection of mother's attitude, but does not give cognizance to the primary autonomy, the built-in maturational unfolding that enlarges the power of the ego to restrain drive expressions. Winnicott explicitly refers to the building of

ego functions by the mother's adaptive capacity. He does not see the infant as an active participant in his signaling, regulation, selectivity, and response pattern. These formulations orient the developmental process toward libidinal gratification, stressing the mother's capacity to gratify and to lend her ego to establish ego. It is necessary to separate the "need phase" of the first few months from later development. Kohut (1977) proposes a similar holding or "lending" position of the primary object (and subsequently of the therapist).

Earlier (1956) Winnicott had said, "A good-enough environmental provision in the earliest phase enables the infant to begin to exist, to have experience, to build a personal ego, to ride instincts, and to meet with all of the difficulties inherent in life" (p. 304). These are inferences as to the development of the self, the personal ego; moreover, he shares Fairbairn's optimism that such early conditions will provide the child with all the strengths he will ever need, whatever the vicissitudes of life may be. Implied in this is the notion that a failure of this provision will damage the child forever. Such views lead to unrealistic, pessimistic forecasts of the irreparability of early failures in the mother-child relationship. This focus on the mother has led Wanhg (1981) to ask: "Are we not scapegoating a whole generation of mothers, blaming them in retrospect for all anxieties of present-day life?" And Arlow (1981) said, "the propensity to identify the mother as the villain in one's life and as the culprit in theories of pathogenesis has a long history in the development of the individual as well as of the group. This may be one reason contributing to the facile acceptance of certain theories of pathogenesis which place the onus on the non-nurturing, unempathic caretaker" (p. 504f.).

Some of our theories of development not only scapegoat mother, but they minimize the influence of development and the reparative potential of later experience. These developmental ideals fail to consider those necessary ingredients of normal development that demand delay of gratification, anxiety connected with the loss of the object, stranger and separation reactions, the conflicts between ego and drive demands on all levels of development. The stranger reaction, so early in life,

confirms the infant's capacity to discriminate between the "known" object and the unknown intruder, a capacity that manifests itself in increased clinging to mother. This stage is soon overcome, and curiosity and experimentation are resumed. The influence of later development correcting earlier faults, deficiencies, and conflicts and the maturational pull on developmental organization require object relations theories to include the other metapsychological dimensions.

SOME PRINCIPLES IN ASSESSING DEVELOPMENT

When structures formed at a given stage become, in certain ways, an integral part of subsequent structures, we are aware that the changes are not just quantitative but qualitative in nature. I do not refer here to the overlapping of phases or the coexistence of earlier and later drive expressions, the simultaneous presence of immature and advanced ego functions, or our understanding of the unevenness in developmental sequences; what I have in mind are the general laws that determine the maturational sequences based on biological influences and those developmental sequences which are the product of the interaction with the environment. As Anna Freud (1965) emphasized, "There is in childhood no stable level of functioning in any area or at any time. . . . Owing to shifts in development and changes in degrees of internal and external pressure, optimal positions are repeatedly gained, lost, and reinstated" (p. 122).

The view of mother-child as a unit of observation and investigation very often obscures this complexity. Alongside the concept of sequential phase organization, we have another psychoanalytic view that imposes upon us the knowledge that all of a person's experiences are in some form continuously present; that by free association we can gain access to the earliest memories, thoughts, and affect constellations; that we will find, however much distorted, displaced, condensed, that is to say, modified by defensive maneuvers, the continuous reverberations, replays, and influences from all levels of psychic life. But there still remains the task of establishing the nature of these influ-

ences and the child's reactions to them; to do this, we look to the changing modes of developmental organization and the retrospective reordering of past experiences and memories.

Studies of early infant development show that next to the mirroring-conforming response, there is, from earliest life on, an apparatus that actively screens and selects stimuli and takes part in the regulation of the child-mother relationship. The infant responds selectively to outside stimulation. In other words, the selected environment is an expression of the infant's choice. Hartmann (1964) has extended his notion of adaptation to the earliest months before ego-id differentiation has occurred, if we accept the early regulatory functions as forerunners of later adaptation of the ego. This, among other factors, leads to wide variations and combinations of early development. This capacity to discriminate, to seek matching experiences, contributes to the evolvment of reality testing. Greenacre (1973) has addressed herself to this topic, and one of her statements is especially relevant to my topic: "New experiences are constantly multiplying in the child's second year, and old ones are being experienced from so many new angles that reconciliations between past and present experiences are continually needed. Similarities and differences are the source of much infantile comparison, and sometimes of anxiety. Substitutions and contrasts are frequent in the developing need to establish practical dependable realities in a world that has suddenly enlarged" (p. 16).

Greenacre's explorations of reality testing in response to the primal scene can be extended to refer to the sibling experience. Body changes in the second year of life, and the observation of the body of the sibling, the observation of mother's alternate behavior—all invite spontaneous reality testing, even though it may still be primitive and under the fluctuating influences of drive pressures.

Mahler and her collaborators (1975), by outlining the double-track processes of separation and individuation, emphasize the above by defining separation as the child's emergence from a symbiotic fusion with mother, and individuation as the achievements which mark the child's assumption of his own

individual characterists. Both are connected, but also separate. It seems that rivalry, envy, and jealousy contribute to both tracks, each in its own dynamics, throughout development.

While I have restricted this discussion of the sibling experience to the first years of life, clearly it would be of advantage to explore the place of rivalry, envy, and jealousy in development by following their sequences from the earlier struggle into the oedipal phase and beyond. It would be important to focus on the fate of rivalry, envy, and jealousy through latency, pre-adolescence, and adolescence, e.g., the shift from rivalry to competition during latency, and the reemergence of preoedipal conflicts during preadolescence. Or, envy with its longing for attributes that can never be attained, obviously has an influence on the differentiation between self and object. We can assume that if envy persists, it must have an impact on latency issues and an even more decisive one on adolescence.

Such assumptions are based on the concept of continuity of conflict and development and the notion—which I think is proposed only by the psychoanalytic theory of development—that one can expect a revival of earlier conflicts during later phases as part of normal development. But we also have to consider the concept of discontinuity. This concept refers to the disengagement from old organization and the sudden emergence of new structures; for instance, the enhancement of memory at the age of 8 to 12 months; or, at about 17 months, the emergence of the symbolic linguistic mode that replaces the purely perceptual-sensory organization. One would therefore also have to examine a person's entire development with the notion of discontinuity in mind in order to assess the various changes and modifications of sibling rivalry, envy, and jealousy. Thus, we see here again what is so characteristic of development: on the one hand, we can observe the recapitulation of earlier conflicts; and on the other, we find the appearance of new structures.

Psychoanalytic theory has advanced many assumptions to explain the processes of differentiation and structuralization in development. Notable are Hartmann's concept of an undifferentiated phase out of which ego and id separate; the

emergence of ego functions; the change from primary to secondary processes; phase organization; Anna Freud's most important concept of lines of development. Mahler's contribution of the sequence of separation and individuation focuses on progress by differentiation. Kohut proposes a one-track system—that of self and self-object differentiation, with the self becoming a supraordinate structure. This stops the pursuit of developmental sequences too early and avoids the steps of progression to the oedipal object relations.

Throughout this paper I have referred to rivalry, envy, and jealousy and their effect on the differentiation and specificity of functions. There is the increased curiosity, the need for causality, and the child's theory formation, the increased alertness to comparing and thereby to differentiating objects and their relationship to each other. Rivalry, envy, and jealousy contribute to this process.

I have so far referred to progression and regression, the interlocking of developmental structures, the continuity and discontinuity principle. But a discussion of differentiation in the service of development is incomplete if it does not give attention to those ego functions which perform the task of integration—the unification of separate elements, the coordination of functions to form higher organizations; Nunberg's synthesizing function, related closely to the ego's strivings to fuse drive imbalance; Hartmann's integrative function of the ego to bring together relatively drive-free elements into a secondary autonomy; and the organizing function to bind all these factors into large developmental units of organization.

"By virtue of its primary propensity for mediation and combination, the ego has to undertake as one of its principal tasks the solution of conflicts between different parts. . . . The ego's tendency to unite, to bind and to create, goes hand in hand with a tendency to simplify and to generalize" (Nunberg, 1931, p. 125f.).

While these processes cannot be directly observed, they can be deduced from their effect on further functioning, namely, the child's construction of the representational inner world, the unification of various early objects, and the establishment of

the primacy of objects. The synthesizing and integrating ego functions operate throughout life, but similar to the sudden emergence of specific structures and mental capacities, there may be certain periods in which synthesizing activities gain special significance. It seems that this occurs after some degree of object constancy has emerged, or that the occurrence of object constancy is the result of heightened integrative ego influence.

I have mentioned before that the capacity to differentiate among objects may indeed strengthen the role of the primary object and thereby the oedipal phase. The increasing sense of reality and the work of secondary processes build a more cohesive image of the self, the object, and the differences between the objects.

To restate my thesis: We are aware of the effects of faults in early relationships on development. We should also consider the opposite factor, namely, the forward pull of less-than-cohesive earlier relationships to a new specificity and organization.

Freud (1921) formulates this under the primacy of the genital organization and personality integration: "In the process of a child's development into a mature adult there is a more and more extensive integration of his personality, a co-ordination of the separate instinctual impulses and purposive trends which have grown up in him independently of one another . . . into a definitive genital organization" (p. 79f.).

SUMMARY

The study of the role of siblings in early life led to an exploration of rivalry, envy, and jealousy, their differences based on the genetic source and the dynamic aspect of each. This paper focused on normal development and not on the clinical conditions in which rivalry, envy, and jealousy are part of trauma and pathology. I emphasized, as one of the positive contributions to development, that conflicts deriving from rivalry, envy, and jealousy, which are an expression of the interactions of all structural components, lead, within the normal range, to an increased alertness which facilitates comparisons and thereby promotes the differentiation of object and self. Such contribu-

tions are neglected by those psychoanalytic theories of early development that are based on the dyadic mother-child relationship and exclude the role of the father, other caretakers, and siblings. A reduction of conditions of normality or pathology to the earliest years of life and to the dyadic relationship of mother-child fails to recognize the developmental pull that takes preoedipal conflicts and structures into oedipal and later phases and does not give sufficient weight to the integrative ego functions. An examination of rivalry, envy, and jealousy confirms the role of multiple objects in early life and its influence in consolidating the primary object representation on successive levels throughout development.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ABELIN, E. L. (1971), The role of the father in the separation-individuation process. In *Separation-Individuation*, ed. J. B. McDevitt & C. F. Settlege. New York: Int. Univ. Press, pp. 229–252.
- ARLOW, J. A. (1981), Theories of pathogenesis. *Psychoanal. Q.*, 50:488–514.
- BURLINGHAM, D. (1973), The preoedipal infant-father relationship. *Psychoanal. Study Child*, 28:23–47.
- FAIRBAIRN, W. R. D. (1952), *Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality*. New York: Basic Books.
- FREUD, A. (1965), Normality and pathology in Childhood. *W.*, 6.
- ____ (1970), The symptomatology of childhood. *W.*, 7:157–188.
- FREUD, S. (1908), On the sexual theories of children. *S.E.*, 9:205–226.
- ____ (1914), Some reflections on schoolboy psychology. *S.E.*, 13:239–244.
- ____ (1916–17), Introductory lectures on psycho-analysis. *S.E.*, 15 & 16.
- ____ (1921), Group psychology and the analysis of the ego. *S.E.*, 18:67–143.
- GREENACRE, P. (1966), Problems of overidealization of the analyst and of analysis. *Psychoanal. Study Child*, 21:193–212.
- ____ (1973), The primal scene and the sense of reality. *Psychoanal. Q.*, 42:10–41.
- HARTMANN, H. (1939), *Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation*. New York: Int. Univ. Press, 1958.
- ____ (1964), *Essays on Ego Psychology*. New York: Int. Univ. Press.
- HAWKINS, M. O'NEIL (1946), Jealousy and rivalry in brothers and sisters. *Child Study*, Summer:103–105, 127.
- KOHUT, H. (1977), *The Restoration of the Self*. New York: Int. Univ. Press.
- LEWIS, M. (1980), Child development research and child analysis. Read at the 7th Biannual Regional Conference of the Chicago Psychoanalytic Society.

- MAHLER, M. S. (1972), On the first three subphases of the separation-individuation process. *Int. J. Psychoanal.*, 53:333–338.
- _____, PINE, F., & BERGMAN, A. (1975), *The Psychological Birth of the Human Infant*. New York: Basic Books.
- NUNBERG, H. (1931), The synthetic function of the ego. In *Practice and Theory of Psychoanalysis*. New York: Coolidge Foundation, 1948, pp. 120–136.
- SOLNIT, A. J. (1982), Developmental perspectives on self and object constancy. *Psychoanal. Study Child*, 37:201–218.
- WANGH, M. (1981), Narcissism in our time. Read at the New York Psychoanalytic Society.
- WINNICOTT, D. W. (1956), Primary maternal preoccupation. In *Collected Papers*. New York: Basic Books, 1958, pp. 300–305.
- _____, (1960), Ego distortion in terms of true and false self. In *Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment*. New York: Int. Univ. Press, 1965, pp. 140–152.